

REMARKS

Claims 12-14 are all the claims pending in the application.

I. Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-11, 15-26 and 27-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sugita (EP 744840 A2) and claims 1-6, 11, 15-26 and 27-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Easton et al. (US 6,590,886 B1).

Applicant has canceled these claims without prejudice or disclaimer.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 13 and 14 have been allowed and for indicating that claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claim 12 has been rewritten in independent form. Applicant respectfully submits that this case is in a condition for immediate allowance.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Serial No. 09/656,715

Attorney Docket No.: Q60731

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

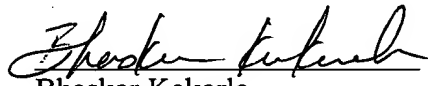
Respectfully submitted,

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